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A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

AUGUST 5, 1935

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PACIFIC WEEKLY

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VOLUME III

MONDAY, AUGUST 5, 1935

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NOTES AND COMMENT

CATCH IN IT

SOME debate has been taking place this week as to why Hearst has suddenly started "telling on" his friend Hitler—reporting that gentleman's little tirades against Jews, Catholics, nuns, veterans and anyone else he chooses to torture, persecute and imprison. Our idea was that in a while Mr. Hearst would let up, and the news would come that Mr. Hitler (on Mr. Hearst's advice) had let up. This is exactly what happened. July 30 the *Examiner* headlined: "NAZIS HALT DRIVE ON FOES OF REICH." The catch is that now only those foes of the Reich whom Mr. Hearst also considers foes of his Reich (the USA) are left for Mr. Hitler to torture, murder and persecute—liberals, pacifists, communists, socialists, trade unionists and cultured men and women. That's all right with all of us; we all approve of persecution of such non-American (non-Nazi in Germany) elements.

FAKE REPORTERS

INDEED the capitalist papers find it hard to make their choice between being reporters of the news and propaganda tools of the big interests. One method of solving these contradictory aims they have widely chosen is to be one in the news story and the other in the caption. Thus people's continued astonishment at captions which bear less and less relation to the stories they are about, and which are leading an ever-growing section of the population to say, "Oh, I don't read the newspapers; they don't tell the truth; you wouldn't be able to believe them any more if they did."

The San Francisco *Chronicle* of July 31 prints the New York Times cable from Moscow which relates:

Darcy said the employers' agreement with the dock workers expires in September and shipping operators are already preparing for a struggle to eliminate revolutionary leadership from the trade unions. Darcy was communist candidate for Governor of California at the last election.

"Obviously the latter will not voluntarily retreat from

their existing position," said Darcy. "All this indicates embittered struggles. It is very possible this may be the beginning of a strike of unprecedented scope. The result of the struggle not only depends on the work which we will carry on on the Pacific Coast."

This story the *Chronicle* captions in an eight-column banner headline: MOSCOW PLANS S. F. STRIKE.

TOO BAD

THE current July number of *New Frontier* announces itself as the final number. Too bad. That magazine had intellectual integrity. The editors of it, Brooks Otis and Reuben Brower, have farewell articles that are sad, defeated but in character. Honest, sincere and highly articulate to the end they have and they express beautifully their just pride in their ideal and their effort. And Mr. Otis tells the story which might well be booked as a classic as the representative narrative of an educated man who made an experiment in right thinking and who learned from his eager study of this world today. He made progress, he grew. He tells how he came out of Harvard a humanist; never studied economics, but with and needing consciously (as we all do unconsciously) a philosophy; he sought one all his life. He tried to use all his (and our) experiences, winking nothing and he tells how he went all the way right up to Communism and Marx. There he stands now, balancing on the very top of the barricade. His tale is fascinating, it's the story of a whole class of honest scholars, but—we guess—it is but half the story. And he doesn't see, we suspect, that the best is to come. We wish he and Reuben Brower would use this weekly for succeeding chapters. Such integrity and awareness are—genius. —L. S.

AN "EXPOSE"

COINCIDENT with the meeting this week of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in Moscow, the Hearst papers are running an "exposé" of the "inside workings of the Communists". "The Red plot and their leaders have been uncovered by secret agents of the American Legion, and these discoveries have been made available to the *Examiner*" whispers the *Examiner*. Sh-h-h! Ye plot unfolds. At great danger to themselves, these legionnaires have been tiptoeing about—their names can't be made known, their spy-work is so dangerous and secret—and have discovered:

ARTICLE I. The Communists are trying to seize the A. F. of L. Honest! It took the Legion three years of dangerous undercover-agenting to find out what all the labor papers have been spreading over headlines for the same period.

ARTICLE II. Matilda Carterzinsky calls herself Matilda Carter. Honest! We hope these astute Legionnaires will be immediately given jobs as ace G-men. Maybe they will even find Mahan.

But what seems to have upset Mr. Hearst and his ill-timed revelations not a little, and what will doubtless always continue to upset those who believe communists go about terminating their belief that it isn't just or dignified that two per cent of the nation own ninety per cent of its wealth, and little

children by the thousand grow up undernourished, is that the Communists in World Congress assembled are telling so much more so much more freely and openly than the Legionnaire-Examiner, Hearst-Closson crowd have been able to dig up by pretence, lies, stool-pigeoning and spying. Earl Browder gives the world information about communist groups in A. F. of L. unions in the very same newspaper in which Hearst hollers about "plots admitted" and "secret agents uncovering" the same information.

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

MUSSOLINI meets the observation that his people are indifferent to or against his war on Ethiopia by calling out 100,000 Romans to roar for the war. That should show us, but it doesn't. Hitler could make his Germans cry for or against war any day. We saw President Wilson turn practically all Americans from anti- to pro-war in a few weeks. People are potential pianos for a skilled performer till they go red, then they are no use to anybody. Hence our love of law and order.

POLICE REFORM in San Francisco! Trying to separate the police from the criminals and crooks! I have been all through that several times and I tell you it can't be done. The professors of "government" should see, know and teach that you can no more divorce vice and the police than you can make a railroad commission regulate railroads, a chamber of commerce handle business, a medical association cure doctors or a board of regents develop education in a college. And teachers should show their students why. It's a problem in economics or physics. But our reporters and professors treat it as a moral problem. Vice and crime are the customers of the police, business and professions are the patrons of politics and government.

A CROOKED POLICE chief I knew well once, protested a police exposure by exclaiming; "What do they want? Don't we put down their strikes for 'em?" And I exclaim: "Don't you see the relation of graft to business and to law and order?" Our patriots don't understand our government which they stand for; and which they undermine. Never knowing it.

PRAVDA, THE government organ of Soviet Russia, bids the workers of the world unite for action but also says action cannot wait for labor to unite. Some realism there. We who want to first think and learn, then act, have not noticed that, in practice, we proceed in the opposite direction. We learn in action. Action comes first, then thought. The human mind is a descendant of the animal tail which has gone to our head where it still waves "rationalization" of what we DO.

THE SOVIET Russians, needing engineers, have produced a surplus of them. Can't use so many. Judging by the "news", the need now is for psychologists. There's a tip here for our students, too. When the engineers have dealt with our abundance by killing pigs, our youth will have to find some other way than marriage to reduce the abundance of love to moderation.

RALPH FOX, writing in *Fight* about "Lawrence the Twentieth Century Hero", points out that just when politics opened to him in England he went off to become a ranker in the British Army in India. Fox finds the cue in the "epitaph" which

Lawrence wrote to the poet Robert Graves, to wit: The conquest of the last element, the air, seems to me the only major task of our generation; and I have convinced myself that progress is to be made not by the single genius, but by the common effort **** The genius raids, the common people occupy and possess. Wherefore I stayed in the ranks and served to the best of my ability." But get and read it all. The *Fight* article finds an angle by the fit of which this glamorous Lawrence of Arabia can be saved for the Future. We Futurists should organize a department for the confused who are "all wrong" but right. Mustn't let these conceited lefts have everything their own way.

A CARMEL PARENT was remarking with wonder how all the boys and girls hereabouts liked to go to school. He didn't; I didn't, but his youngsters did and mine did. We agreed that there is something wrong about our school; besides the trustees, I mean: some deep flaw right in the school itself. The teachers maybe, the faculty. I cannot agree with the sour faces who think it's the principal's pants. I think it's nearer his hat.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT says we'll stay out of the Ethiopian war; "no concern of ours". Seems to me we have heard that before. From another President about another war that was no concern of ours. The trouble is that a world war requires world wealth to burn and we alone have that; certainly the other nations have no surplus to burn. Chester Rowell said over the radio the other day that it was the economic failure of Italy and Germany—in a word, of Fascism, that made Hitler and Mussolini need a war to cover their failures

THERE, BY the way, you have one plain difference between the Fascist and the Communist dictatorships: the blooming Bolsheviks don't need or want a war. But the capitalist dictatorships do. Any capitalist system has to have wars to burn up its surplus products and so start again to produce profits. Our presidents are sincerely representing us when they refuse to see us at war, but they and we don't see what wars are made of. As a pacifist I agree with the generals that we should bring up our children to be soldiers. And as an economist, however bum, I have a hunch we shall get into any world war that comes along if only enough to pay for it. Loans, of course, but bankers, not presidents and politicians, make our

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loans and soldiers alone can collect them, if collected. But the present point about capitalism is that business has ceased to pay back loans. That is why we radicals say the system is bankrupt. It's funny the business men can't see it, if they can't.

Reminds me of the baby that woke up for the first time in the dark. He sat up, looked this way and that, saw no father, no mother, nothing, and said comfortably: "Baby aw right."

CARMEL, PROBABLY the whole Pacific Coast has been having sunshine for two or three days. Sunshine in summer! Here!

THE NEXT discipline in so-called proletarian writing should be, I think, to address the workers, to write not necessarily about, but for them. And I am thinking of a step in the progress of the art of writing. It is unaccustomed to imagine a proletarian audience, but I notice that some Soviet writers do it and I, no proletarian, like it. In this spirit, with this audience, it would be wonderful to have a story or a play about the very rich or righteous. In Hollywood lately they have been fore-gathering with the movie heads from Russia and observers, principally our own—from and for the PACIFIC WEEKLY—

report that the Soviet critics, managers and actors do like some of our well done "capitalist" and "imperialist" plays. THEY don't require or expect proletarian movies; they like Muni's *Black Fury*, with all its concessions. Art for art's sake, even if there's capitalist propaganda in it. But I would like to remark, as they did not, that maybe the modern Russians can be trusted to edit or read and understand propaganda; they can eat strong meat without swallowing the bones that choke them. Anyhow the Russians from Soviet Russia would like to take home and show some of our best capitalist films; best, I said.

There is some connection between security and liberty, between tolerance and liberalism and fearlessness. Maybe we should pity, not hate Fascists—after the revolution.

THE SOVIET Russians, officials and other, are gathering in San Francisco, to watch the Soviet flyers arrive at the end of their straight line "around by the North Pole" from Moscow. A feat indeed! They are going some day to have an air-way from the capital of their country to San Francisco. An open road that anybody may travel, as free as air. One hopes they will do it the first time, but you may be sure they will make it some day.



MOVIES OF TWO WORLDS

BY LUCITA SQUIER

THE cinema is one of the new giant industries of the Soviet Union. By the end of 1937 its 32,000 theatres are to increase to 70,000, its 300 yearly pictures to some 800—including features, news-reels and educational films. "That is why we came to study American film technique and organization," said Boris Shumiatsky, President of the Soviet motion picture industry, "we recognize it as the best in the world." After Carmel, even the spacious Hollywood apartment where the Soviet Film Delegates were quartered seemed oppressive with the heat, but not to Shumiatsky, in a heavy suit and dark blue flannel shirt; he assured me he felt very cold—recalling sweltering summer days on the Volga with Russians in sheepskin shubas. Tall, well built and courteous, Shumiatsky gave one a feeling of Russian expansiveness and quiet force, while at a nearby desk, busy with last-day conferences, was Nielsen in a yellow sport sweater that became his blond, almost boyish appearance. Nielsen is president of the Faculty of Cinema Technique in Moscow. Like Shumiatsky he is author of a number of books, including *The Film as an Imaginative Structure* and *Pictorial Art of the Cinema*.

The Academy of State Cinematography is the only college of its kind in the world. In the past 15 years it has turned out 500 qualified directors, operators, actors and scenarists; its faculty is composed of distinguished directors and writers. One must pass a rigid examination before admittance as a student and is not permitted to become a qualified worker until after four years of intensive training. Somewhat frail in appearance, with eager, nervous motions and a quick smile was Fred-

erick Erlmer, President of the Motion Picture Directors' and Actors' Association. He directed *Fragments of an Empire* and *Counter-Plan*. For his latest production, *Peasants*, he was awarded the Order of Lenin. Such directors receive as much as 1500 rubles per month and 1 per cent profits from their films, 2 per cent if they write the scenario and 3 per cent if they write the dialogue as well—an outstanding production may net the director 250,000 rubles. "But the highest possible reward," explained Erlmer, "was in the peasants telling us 'your picture is absolutely true to life. When we saw the film we were reminded of our own collective farm, of our own mistakes and achievements . . .'"

In the Soviet Union life goes faster than films. It takes from six months to two years to produce a picture. That is one of the reasons the Delegation is hastening home with American methods of precise use of lighting, trick photography, new processes for recording, for making negatives—"We aim to speed up the production of a film to four or five months," put in Erlmer, "but not its tempo. You Americans tell us that we should speed up our action. Perhaps, a little. Life on the collectives is intensely dynamic, but as the peasants have a characteristic manner of speech and action, our films would not be understood by them if we didn't catch their rhythm. Besides, we like less dialogue than you have over here." Erlmer believes the cinema should follow three main lines: "the film of the Chapayev (civil war hero) type, pictures about the country that will educate the masses, showing the new social man, and pictures that will educate the emotions—new emo-

tions for those who are still psychologically burdened by survivals of the past."

Nielsen expresses it in another form: "First," he puts it, "we aim to make our films works of art; second, they must reflect life; third, they must be understood by the masses."

When a Soviet film is completed a preview is held at a factory or collective farm, if possible the one where it was filmed. For example, a picture was made at a Red Army camp. On returning to the studio the film-group kept in close touch with the Army division and sent it the completed picture for criticism. In the same way the children's film, *Broken Shoes*, was shown at the house of a textile mill-worker. Other parent-workers, the studio director and teachers from the Children's Educational Combine came there to discuss and criticize the film. About 25 per cent of the cinema production for 1936 will be for children. A Children's Experimental Motion Picture Studio has been opened in Moscow, which receives countless letters from children all over the Union requesting the type of films they want to see. Eisenstein, "Honored Artist", and producer of *Potemkin*, is working on a film entitled *Bejin Lug*, about the village of that name immortalized by Turgenev in *Hunter's Notes*. This film will be about children, dedicated to the memory of the pioneer Pavlik Morozov, killed a few years ago by the kulaks for disclosing their anti-Soviet activities.

There is an increasing demand for entertainment, more music, themes of personal relationships in pictures, love, optimism; these are growing in popularity without becoming isolated from the mass idea. For in Russia the cinema and the people are united, the cinema has a social use. Propaganda films continue to be just as strong, but less aggressive and obvious. "Foreign pictures that interest us," says Shumiatsky, "are those concerned with major ideas, strong characterizations like *The Bengal Lancers* which shows British imperialism, films like *Black Fury* and *The Informer*. *Viva Villa* is highly praised in Russia, but they believe the director missed the point of the insurrectionary movement of the Mexican peons, although he succeeded in conveying the heroism of the masses. The charm of Mickey Mouse, they say, is its superb craftsmanship, the mathematical correspondence between lines and sound; the Soviet cinema awarded Walt Disney a prize for his animated cartoons. The Russians contend that the public can force film producers to turn out what they desire.

Among the more progressive directors in America they name Mamoulian, Ford, DeMille, Lubitsch, Green, Vidor . . . they praise the acting of Paul Muni, Laughton, Beery . . . In the Soviet Union "People's Artists" like Gardin (who played the leading roles in *Counter-Plan*, *Peasants*, *Song of Happiness*) and Babochkin (who created the title-role *Chapayev*) receive up to 200,000 rubles for an outstanding role, and free railway fares, trips abroad, etc. Regular cinema artists receive from 1,000 to 3,000 rubles per month without royalties. There are not many of them, as directors prefer to draw artists from the theatres—of which there are 130 in Moscow alone, and actors themselves prefer to be in the theatre where they work more steadily and can do cinema roles as a side line.

"Extras!" repeated Shumiatsky after me reflectively. Surely, I thought, extras could not have been liquidated when Soviet pictures have so many mass scenes! "You see," said Shumiatsky, "the trouble is that we have no unemployment. Getting extras is a great problem; directors even have to call on their friends to help out. In America, of course, it is quite different."

Authors are paid as much as 15,000 rubles for scenarios and

receive royalties. All scripts accepted for production have to be passed by the studio committee. Maxim Gorky says that "men of letters should take a more active part in the work of the cinema. We literary men should make the scenarios ourselves. That is our business." Alexei Tolstoy, author of *Peter the First*, now being filmed, wrote the scenario jointly with the director. This will be the first Soviet movie to have a French and English version. Up to the present pictures have been made in Russian, Georgian, Ukrainian, Armenian and Jewish (Yiddish).

With fourteen studios already operating, colossal construction is under way for further expansion of the industry. In Leningrad a million-ruble model cinema will be completed in six months. At Sukhum, in the Caucasus, a Soviet Hollywood will soon be built. Sukhum, a combination of California and the Riviera, is situated on the Black Sea with a magnificent background of snow-capped mountains; it is surrounded by forests, rivers and sub-tropical foliage of rare beauty and has a high percentage of sunny days. "Only," put in Nielsen, with whom I was discussing this new Paradise, "we have one great problem. Money is no incentive to us to live there, as it is to you Americans who are willing to live in Hollywood for the sake of what you get out of it. I am willing to live in Sukhum six months out of the year, but I want to live the rest in Moscow, the centre of culture and art."

On the eve of their departure the Soviet Delegation gave a farewell banquet at the Victor Hugo in Beverly Hills. At 11 P. M. some forty guests assembled, among them film celebrities and members of the press. With a galaxy of arc-lights, moving picture and still cameras flaring in our faces, a sumptuous supper was served, presided over by our genial host, Shumiatsky. Rouben Mamoulian (director for Dietrich) spoke of the great influence of Russian music in this country. "But after all," he said, "the most important international art is the motion picture. It has helped us understand the Russians and what they are doing. Personally I am looking forward very much to the time when I can visit Russia and learn what is going on there at first hand. They were the first people to introduce a thoroughly developed *montage*—which has become a Hollywood by-word—and we have learned a great deal from them."

Paul Muni spoke next: "I visited Russia for six weeks and was impressed by the people I saw working in the studios—they take it more seriously than we do." Muni, who incidentally praised most highly the acting of Jimmie Cagney, explained that actors should get together and make executives understand that there was something more than merely being paid and going through publicity campaigns. "I greet these people," he concluded, "I know they are sincere and are to be admired. I don't see why we can't emulate them. Why retard these things which they are doing?"

Other speakers were Frank Tuttle, who directed *Roman Scandals*; Ray Mayer, RKO comedian; Lee Marcus, executive-producer at RKO, and Donald Gledhill, Executive Secretary of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, who said: "The visit of these kindly gentlemen has been a genuine experience. A combination of interest in our technique, together with confidence in their own has brought about mutual interest and respect."

With champagne Shumiatsky gave the final toast which Mamoulian, who made excellent translations of the Russian speeches, said was a "poetic flight" that he found difficult to put into English. Shumiatsky warmly invited his guests to attend the coming Cinema Festival in Moscow in May. "Be-

side my admiration for American organization," Shumiatsky said, "I have seen acting at its best, scenes where human beings suffer. I saw one director watch a scene with tears in his eyes, not because he was the director of that scene, but because the actor had caught reality, suffering—a great emotion. When you come to the Soviet Union I shall be glad to welcome you and show you everything that may be of interest in

our Studios."

To the first Cinema Festival in Moscow last May twenty-one countries sent representatives. Shumiatsky declared that it became virtually an "international congress of cinematography". After his visit to Hollywood it is hoped Hollywood will make a return call to Moscow that these two countries may interchange their culture and technique.



LITERATURE AND REVOLUTION

SOME NOTES ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF A YOUNG MAN

BY KARL LONG

I
IT SEEMS necessary at the beginning to say that literature is a serious business: to recognize the old doctrine that the synthetic vision of the poet is the root of the cultural process. It is so easy nowadays to substitute the shadow for the reality, "literature" for life—as it was once convenient to exchange God for the Church—and to forget the grave responsibility of the artist; particularly as that responsibility has come once more to have specific political functions. It is also possible, on the other hand, to neglect, in an era of wars and revolutions, that calmness of the spirit which is the first foundation of art; but these are things which equalize themselves. To successfully reconcile one duty with the other—that is the mark of the artist.

As late as Dickens' time, the identity of artist and "priest" was subjectively recognized; function and response in literature were not individual manifestations, but rather aspects of the whole of society. The decline of this deeply "religious" phenomenon may be ascribed to the development of capitalism, which created a profound disharmony between the artist and society—a disharmony of purpose. During this period of exile—of which the International Union of Revolutionary Writers marks the end—the search of the artist for certainty threw him of necessity back on himself, in an effort to find within his own ego the foundation denied him by organized society. This course of events produced in time the ragged bohemianism which became the prevailing tone of certain sections of Western literature.

Art was advanced as an absolute good; the world forgetting that paraphrase of Hebbel to the effect that art is nothing in itself, but the basic condition of everything. And since literature could be seen in those days to perform no useful social function, it was of necessity self-sustaining. Nature imitates art, said Oscar Wilde. Given the dark Victorian hour in which he said it, it was obviously impossible to reverse the phrase. Literature existed outside of, and largely in spite of, organized society.

This bohemia, this decline in creative power, represented the downward swing of the cultural pendulum. For instance: there have been three great "romantic" periods in English literature: The first, associated with the name of Shakespeare, a consequence of the "commercial revolution"; the second,

connected with Byron, a phase of the industrial revolution (it should never be forgotten that *Pickwick Papers* was written before Queen Victoria); and the beginnings of the third are discernible in such men as Stephen Spender and Cecil Day-Lewis—forerunners, one wonders, of what revolution? But each wave of "romanticism", arising from the trauma of violent social change, pushed back the horizons of human experience new distances; and each spent itself in isolation and "preciousness" before the new began. Such was the fate of Western literature in the early twentieth century.

But the re-creation of value in society (as distinct from value in the individual mind) has meant for our decade as for those of Shakespeare and Byron the rebirth of literature; the artist once more finds not in the ego-I but in the social-I the materials and spirit of his work. This means, for instance, that poetry will no longer be degraded into a private shorthand, but will resume its former position as an organ of social experience. This re-integration of the cultural process is a function of social revolution—the re-awakening of the sense of life.

II

The organic unity of thought and action cannot be broken; to do so is to destroy both. More importantly in the case of the artist, action is the necessary form of the poetic vision. It is not merely that the artist wishes to impose his inner decision upon the world; it is that to remain an artist he must be able to feel the actual impress of his work upon his time. Not to do so means sterility.

Such was the case with pre-revolutionary Russian literature. Many a Russian writer had done heroic service to one revolutionary party or another; but none until 1917 were given opportunity to translate that service into "action"—that is, creative activity; none therefore were able to achieve that catharsis necessary to restore sanity to the national literature. To put it another way: what opportunity had such a writer as Chekov to translate his vision of Russia into concrete terms, to affect by his efforts the deep life of Russia, to accomplish his task as artist and creator?

Such action as we speak of is not necessarily "political". It was no more necessary that Chekov should belong to the Cadets or Social Democrats than that Thomas Mann in our day should become an underground communist in Germany. Yet

Mann, both in Germany and out, exerts a tremendous influence; one not confined to bookshelves but finding expression in the architecture of the State. Goethe's influence, in his turn, was not limited to turning young men to suicide; it permeated every department of German thought, every cast of the German mind, until, at one happy period, one might have looked upon Germany and said, "This is Goethe's." Likewise with Hugo, with Dickens, with every great artist informed with the spirit of the time; as Stendhal said, "I wear the uniform of my generation."

This action may become "political"; one quotes the German Plivier, the Russian Gorki, the Frenchman Barbusse. Here a danger arises that the poetic vision may become incomplete—not from any inherent contradiction between "art" and "propaganda", but simply because it is so much easier to prepare political tracts than to bear the work of art. Such childbirth is painful, and when one is weary and pressed for time, the temptation to construct cheap tracts is inviting. But that is the responsibility of the artist; and not a question of aesthetics.

III

The immediate problem of literature is always the relationship of man and society. For the artist to back the wrong horse is fatal. We ponder the fate of the émigrés literatures today, the German and the Russian—one flourishing, the other dead. The Germans have chosen the future; and, confident in their obedience to history, may look forward to the new Germany, which they have helped to shape, and whose very expectation is support in the long days of exile.

Perhaps the problem may be thrown into a new perspective by the statement that the first duty of the artist is to understand. Only through the powers of the understanding may he satisfy both his perceptions and his duty to society—to the architecture of the State. To "understand" is to comprehend what exists; that in turn is to comprehend what must and shall exist; and that in turn is to understand Engels' phrase that "freedom is the knowledge of necessity". Then comes the freedom of creation and the power to translate art finally into life.



PYRRHIC VICTORY OF PFU

BY MORRIS HELM

JULY 19, 20 and 21 were great days for the Production for Use Congress. The Congress (call it PFU) met in the Ocean Park Auditorium at Santa Monica, 291 organizations, 1286 delegates strong. If the date was only a few days after Bastille Day and Bloody Thursday, it was nevertheless clear that PFU was to be a quiet demonstration of the forces sweeping on to the economy of abundance in a peaceful manner. J. Stitt Wilson, perfect gentleman, true liberal, was head of PFU, and Mr. Wilson was not one to entertain thoughts of the united front or labor party which brought on a three-day fight at the Congress. But to understand PFU one must go back

PFU is a federation of Utopians, Fourth Cycle (Rump Utopians) Epics, California Federation for Production for Use (Rump Epics), Technocrats, unemployed, cooperatives, etc. It sprang, but not full born, from the disillusionment that overcame Sinclair followers in the sad days after November 7, when ex-candidate Sinclair retired to Beverly Hills to write and his campaign organization retired into bewilderment, puzzled and hurt by Sinclair's refusal to listen to either leaders or rank and file. Their request for a democratization of the Sinclair autocracy refused, the leaders walked out: Stitt Wilson, ex-socialist, ex-mayor of Berkeley; Rube Borough and Lewis Martyn, editor and business manager of the *Epic News*; Oliver Thornton, thwarted strategist of the Sinclair campaign; Jerry Voorhis, schoolmaster, and nearly everyone else. Promptly they formed the California Federation for Production of Use, laid plans for a state paper, the *California Challenge*. Stitt Wilson began touring the state. But when the municipal campaign in Los Angeles began, Thornton became chief Epic strategist again, Borough and Martin candidates;

the California Federation died.

Simultaneously another group of younger workers bolting from the Epic movement gathered around a Technocratic lawyer's desk in Los Angeles and called together one delegate each from the Utopians, Technocrats, cooperatives, Epics, etc. This was the Congress for Permanent Rehabilitation, termed at its first meeting an assemblage of "outstanding ineffectives". Effective or ineffective, the group within a week had forced the Los Angeles county board of supervisors to create a county department of Rehabilitation, within three weeks had obtained \$5,000 from the county exploitation funds with which to promote a rehabilitation exposition.

After that both groups sickened fast. But at the rehabilitation exposition, held in Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium they merged and held a convention. Some 300 delegates attended and appointed a committee to meet in March. In March they met and elected a continuation committee of 11 to meet July 19. (The July 19 meeting elected a committee of 33 to meet August 4.)

This, then, is PFU. It was to be a mighty force sweeping California on to production for use. It was to be, too, although the leaders denied it, a rival of the End Poverty League, or rather a substitute, for the League had been killed off by Sinclair at his "democratization" convention. The leaders worked hard on the July 19 convention, but made one mistake. They neglected to form a program of action.

Three days before the Congress opened the leaders got their first foreboding of trouble. Thornton, veteran wobbly leader, suggested that the Communist Party be seated. He wisely saw the split that would follow if they were not. The committee refused. Next day the Communist Party credentials

arrived, accompanied by a letter from Lawrence Ross in San Francisco.

The Communist Party is committed to a program of production for use, not only for the unemployed but for the whole people, Ross wrote on behalf of the party. The Communists "were glad to note in the call issued by the continuation committee that they recognized the necessity of working to gain political influence and power. The Communist Party was 'heartily in sympathy with the Congress' statement that there is an urgent need of a 'united movement for freedom, security and the right to work'." The Communist Party also, Ross said, realized the difference in the ultimate aims of the Party and other groups in the Congress, but saw no reason why they could not unite in the common struggle on immediate issues of the unemployed (the Congress had announced a Committee on that), on unemployment insurance, vigilante terror, etc.

The PFU leaders debated a little, then wired the Communist Party that they would not be seated. Apparently they thought the issue was now settled. A few were doubtful, realizing that the 100 approved delegates from the Public Works and Unemployed League and many left wing Epic delegates would back up the Communist leaders.

When the delegates arrived at the beach auditorium next morning they were mildly perturbed. Half of the early arrivals were Communists. *Western Workers* and leaflets explaining the Communist stand on their admission to the Congress were being handed out on all sides. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Voorhis, perturbed, stalled for a while. They pleaded with Lawrence Ross to accept the report of the credentials committee. Ross, his arm slung in a sling from an auto wreck he had coming down, a huge pipe projecting from his mouth, said nothing. He led his group of ten Communist delegates in solemn procession. Like an emperor, a young woman delegate whispered in awe. It became apparent that Ross would be a factor. It became more evident when petitions were circulated calling for the Congress to endorse the united front and for a labor party, and when by noon some 150 delegates had signed the petition.

It was afternoon before the credentials committee, elected from the floor, reported—and in favor of seating the Communists! The delegates were getting a glimpse of how left-wingers worked. Immediately Wilson, Voorhis and Borough swung into action. They had no quarrel with the Communists. They could come as delegates from other groups. Voltaire was right, etc. But if the Communists were seated, large blocs of followers would be "scared off". The left-wingers, now 150 strong, began calling for Ross. Voorhis yielded to the Communist leader.

Ross repeated what he had said in his letter. His party was in sympathy with the aims of the Congress and were not trying to split the working class. Seconding him was Dave Price, a young unemployed metallurgist, who, as chairman of the Public Works and Unemployed League, has become the *bête noire* of Los Angeles county relief officials. Speaking quietly, his thick-lensed glasses gleaming at the delegates, Price now became the floor leader of the left-wing group and the *bête noire* of the loyal PFUers. But the left-wing, after a noisy session, lost by a vote of 262 to 159. As he had said he would, Ross wished the Congress good luck and led his delegation from the floor amid cheers from everybody. It was a great moral victory for the left-wing, and the PFUers were feeling it.

Next business of the Congress was to elect committees, orig-

inally to have been taken up an hour after convening. It was the second day, however, before the Congress, with Wilson as permanent chairman, settled the Communist question. Now, to permit the delegates to know each other, the Congress split into nine caucuses to elect the committees.

Again the right-wingers were to see the left-wingers go into action. In each caucus it was suggested that volunteers rise to serve on the committees. What good-hearted Utopian would be so rude as to ask what the volunteers' alliances were? And what bewildered Epic was as fast on his feet as left-wingers? When the Congress met as a whole again it became known that the left-wing had representation on all committees and control of two—those on immediate issues of the unemployed and on resolutions.

The committees went to work, and the afternoon, for the remaining delegates, droned on with speeches. "The way to get production for use is to get production for use." "Production for use isn't anything like what you think it is but it's ten times as interesting." "There are idle factories in Chicago." Late Saturday night revolt threatened to flare up, but Wilson, master of platform strategy, broke into an impassioned oration. With the aid of "America", sung by the delegates, the convention adjourned safely Saturday night.

Sunday morning Upton Sinclair spoke from Cleveland to the delegates. He talked of the thirty years of his thinking life and of the New Deal's failure. There were a few more talks, and the Committees began to report. The Congress perked up. Mr. Wilson and associates had worked hard for months. Certainly there would be big things forthcoming now. Unfortunately, this surmise proved in error.

The committee on consumers' cooperatives resolved that co-operatives should be encouraged to send delegates to an assembly (what assembly not designated) which would consider means to obtain a cooperative society.

The committee on education created a board of education, to report at the next PFU convention. The committee also approved union labor for PFU work.

The committee on principles adopted a mild socialist report, with recommendations for the Lundeen Bill, civil rights, democratic political action and a policy of "choosing and supporting such parties and candidates as seem most likely to actually put into practice the principles here set forth."

The church report, "recognizing God . . ." urged "workmen . . . factory owners . . . to unite in search of methods that will permit an abundance of goods to be supplied . . . and distributed in strict equity . . ." The explanation of this slightly puzzling terminology lay in the originator of the recommendation, one Thornwald Siegfried, economic panacea expert and author of a wool dollar method of subsidizing factories.

It was late Sunday afternoon before these reports were completed, and the hall had to be vacated at six. Still there was no permanent organization, no resolutions. The indefatigable Price sought to have the permanent organization committee report and stayed until the resolutions were in, but was beaten. Finally the committee on permanent organizations reported. Their plan was prepared by Paul Bruns, attorney and former chairman of the rehabilitation Congress, and Ernie Buttner, cigar-chewing telephone employe. It provided for a board of seven, elected by congressional districts. Canny observers saw here a political set-up; Price saw bureaucracy. He moved a substitute motion setting up a committee of 30 to prepare a permanent organization. Lacking a majority behind him, the wily unemployed leader maneuvered chairman Wil-

son into speaking on the motion. Out on the spot, Wilson supported Price, and the left-wing sailed to victory behind Mr. Wilson's unsullied canvas. The convention again split into caucuses to elect the 30. Back came Price and the left-wingers with 12 of the 30 in their pocket. Mr. Voorhis and Wilson became more worried than ever.

It was five o'clock before the committee on immediate issues of the unemployed appeared. It was read by chairman Ben Legere, San Francisco united front leader, and sponsored from the floor by Price. At once it was apparent that here was the first report that was at all specific, and that it had been prepared by the left-wing group.

The report endorsed the Lundeen Bill, demanded union wages on relief, socially useful relief projects, demanded that relief budgets be raised to the Lundeen Bill level, condemned the use of relief money for military purposes, attacked the Chamber of Commerce, demanded union wages in cooperatives, condemned fascism and war, etc.

The committee also reported out what the Congress had been awaiting for three days—the resolution of the united front and the labor party, which also was scheduled to come favorably out of the committee on resolutions. But chairman Wilson ruled that the resolution was not logically a part of the report and should be referred to the resolutions committee. Would Mr. Price appeal his ruling? Mr. Price would and did. Again the left-wing went down to defeat by a rough

2-1 vote.

It was five minutes to six when the vote was taken, and the united front and labor party proposals were still in committee. The left-wing leadership on the resolutions committee, headed by Legere and a young newspaper reporter, fought to have the convention continued in another hall. The opposition moved that the resolutions prepared by the resolutions committee be referred to the newly-elected board of 30, now expanded to 33 to include Wilson and some others. That motion carried. Mopping his brow, Chairman Wilson brought the first big convention of the PFU to a close. The board of 33 will meet August 4.

The PFU leaders are still talking in sweeping terms about the magnificent power of the PFU in California, but they give an impression of diligent whistling in the dark. The left-wingers are jubilant. There is no doubt that the idea of the united front and the labor party ticket have struck much fresh ground. And by their skill, sincerity and fair tactics the unemployed and left-wing groups have grown in the eyes of many a loyal Epic and Utopian. Even the most bewildered of the right-wingers, the kind that gave Sinclair his glory vote, are wondering if something is not wrong when all the action suggested comes from the left-wing. The opposition calls the left-wing "obstructionists", but at the July 19 Congress it was a trifle hard to discover what they were obstructing. In the language of metallurgist Price, it was a sadly Pyrrhic victory for PFU.

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GENEVA

BY DEAN BESHCHICH

IN THE battlefield cemeteries of the world
The maggots are hungry again.
Come, silk-hatted delegates to the Disarmament Conference,
Under the cloak of peace talk
Polish the gold braid of your Admirals and Generals.
Under a smoke screen of noble words
Create new secret alignments.
When the searchlight of honesty pierced the lies of your conclave in 1919,
You heard the words of Litvinoff
And you flew to the trees with patriotic gibberish—
Buzzards
Disturbed at your carrion feast.
What now, little men, what now?
Japanese or Jugo Slavs?
Chinese or Germans, Italians or Frenchmen?
Divide the world's plunder—gentlemen—
Abyssinia and Manchukuo . . . BUT
Go easy on the Soviet Union—Gentlemen—
One hundred and seventy millions thunder NO!
And NO echo a hundred million Chinese Soviets!
Feed the hungry maggots on American strikers and unemployed,
Pile high the rotting corpses in cities and towns,

Feast on the gore of women and kids.
Maggots hunger for the soft sweet flesh of babies,
Devouring, watching the index on the stock exchange,
Singing George M. Cohan songs,
Driving Red Cross cars a thousands miles behind the lines.
Pump poison gas into the lungs of the new young men,
Plunge the world into poverty, degradation, peonage,
But guard your silk hats—gentlemen—
The maggots are hungry for carnage again.

Feed us the pretty words, silk hats—
"Lafayette, we are here."
Load us up with syphilis, gangrene, insanity,
Screaming with our eyeballs shot out,
"My country right or wrong."
Crunch the skulls of women and kids
Under the war tanks;
"I'm choking, it's gas, I can't breathe—"
Squirt the pretty words at us,
"We do our part" . . .
"What Mr. Hearst thinks of Communism" . . .
Save the Mellons and the stock exchange—
The maggots are hungry for carnage again.

The American delegate has a slogan;

"Make the world safe for Democracy."
The British Delegate thunders a speech;
"The sun shall never set on British Soil."
The Japanese;
"We must civilize the far East."
The Italian;
"We must civilize Ethiopia."
Open the conference with a prayer, gentlemen, and sing,
"Deutschland Ueber Alles."
From Threadneedle street and from Broad and Wall
The cablegrams hum—
"The maggots are hungry for carnage again."

The maggots are hungry chanting a song—
"Drive the lousy cattle to the bloody fields,
And feed their flesh to the worms,
Bathe them in famine, pestilence, blood,
With infinite billions of influenza germs."

Jam full the battlefield cemeteries of the world—gentlemen—
To save the silk hats.
A million Americans choke a carrion gas death;
"Water, for Christ's sake, get me some water—"
To save the Mellons and the stock exchange.
Zoom over the cities spewing a death stench
Over the piled bodies of noncombatants, women and kids;
Train young National Guardsmen gassing and clubbing strikers,
Bash in their heads with rifle butts,
Rip up their guts with shiny bayonets,
And pin Legionnaire buttons on Beef Squads, Vigilantes!
While a regimental Glee Club in a cantonment camp
Wins a silver cup singing, "Smiles".

The silk hats take twenty thousand in profit for every young workman
Fed to the maggots.
The whores follow the army and the stock exchange follows the whores.

The flesh of the young men turns blue,
In a decomposed stench, piling up 10 per cent plus
For the silk hats—
"How beautiful the coupons bloom, in Flanders Fields,"
The poet sings.

Silk-hatted delegates at the Conference tables,
Come, sling the pretty words at us,
"The self-determination of small nations" . . .
"The war to end war" . . .
"Saving the world for Civilization"—National Honor.
Again, in the battlefield cemeteries
The maggots are hungry, chanting a song—
"Don't break the heart of the world."

Save the silk hats from the menace of Communism,
The menace of a sane and happy workers' world!
By blowing the women and kids to hell,
By blasting the cities to ashes with 42 centimeter guns,
By ripping the shiny bayonets into striking workers,
By jamming the unemployed into concentration camps,
By pumping the new germ guns into civil populations.
Scuttle the Unknown Soldiers' graves
So Senators can shed new tears, lay new wreaths, while
Thundering new patriotic speeches.
Save the silk hats—gentlemen—
Save the Mellons and the Stock Exchange—
The maggots are hungry for carnage again.

Into the consciousness of the world's millions
Saturates the whisperings of an awakening answer,
FOR YOU, Politicians and Financiers—
FOR YOU, Diplomats and Admirals, Tycoons and Generals;
"Fat maggots were fed on the fields of the dead,
On the farmers and workers you formerly led.
When maggots are hungry, WE KNOW WHAT
TO DO,
WE ARISE AS ONE MAN, AND FEED THEM
ON YOU!"



SOVIET SPORTS PARADE

BY ROBERT MERRIMAN

(This is the fourth of a series of bulletins written by Mr. Merriman of the Department of Economics of the University of California, from Moscow to his friends.)

WE HAVE been very interested in the emphasis which is placed on mass physical culture in the Soviet Union. All types of sport are encouraged by means of factory sport clubs and gyms. On free days the forests around Moscow are full of workers brought out in their factory trucks. When I was visiting the collective farms there was one young man along whose whole job was to teach new mass games to the school children. All of the organizations in Moscow have tennis court privileges so that their workers are

able to play without a long wait. The crowning event of the summer sports season has just been held and we feel that it deserves a special bulletin.

The Red Square was decorated with enormous red flags, the largest of which reached from the ground to a point higher than the building opposite Lenin's Tomb. Along the second story of this building was a row of flowers of all kinds, with two large pictures of Lenin and Stalin in the center. Our position was next to the tomb on the reviewing stand side and we could closely observe Stalin, Kalinin, Voroshilov, Maxim Gorky, Molotov, Litvinoff, Dimitroff, Rolland, the visiting French author, and all the other members of the Central Com-

mittee. Stalin looked a little older than I thought he would, although he is much pleasanter than the pictures usually seen of him at home. Gorky was very interesting looking and wore a long picturesque black hat which had practically no crown.

In the square stood two bands of about 200 instruments each, and first one would play and then the other, so that there was continuous music. The parade alone lasted five hours, after which the mass dances and exercises were held. Each group had a different color combination and a different float, headed by flag-bearers, some carrying as many as fifty flaming red flags. With several of the groups were trumpet squadrons who played while passing through the square. Most of the men wore nothing but shorts, the usual costume for practically all sports. The girls wore shorts and jerseys and often tams of various colors and styles. It was thrilling to see hundreds and hundreds march through in costumes of bright red, blue, orange, green and other colors. Many of the groups of girls carried flowers made into bouquets with colored ribbons.

Every sport was represented with the exception of American baseball (which they are just starting to play) and American football (they play soccer and rugby instead). And in addition there were many sports which I do not know how to describe since they are entirely Russian.

The cycling section included seven thousand bicycles with decorated wheels and riders. At one place about a thousand rang the bells on the handle bars. This group even had its own band, playing instruments and riding the bicycles at the same time.

Each sport was represented by a float, many of them very ambitious undertakings. Men were diving from towers into nets; one group was running around a track; there were three sets of boxers; one set of wrestlers; two people playing tennis; a fast game of volley ball; a soccer player kicking goals; two basketball teams with moving baskets. The players were not portrayed, but actually in the process of good active playing. Many floats showed the records made by Soviet sportsmen and the world records toward which they are striving. Many Soviet champions accompanied these floats. The seven girls who jumped with parachutes from a height of over 22,000 feet without the aid of oxygen apparatus and landed safely, were also in the parade and loudly applauded.

One particular section was very clever. Not long ago Stalin made a speech to the graduates of the military academy saying that in the past the great need of machinery had placed all emphasis in that direction. Now he claims that since the machinery is being produced trained cadres are necessary to utilize it in the best manner. In other words, the human development must keep pace with the machine technique. Now, to get back to the story, this one group was headed by a large banner in the shape of an arrow pointing to it on which was written, *We Report About the Cadres*. Then came all of the special groups who were exceedingly well trained in some sport or other.

The slogan for their mass physical culture is "Prepared for Work and Defense". I have never seen a finer collection of young people in my life. We watched closely to see if we could tell whether or not they just turned out for this one day and ignored the sports program at other times. We found our answer. Of all the parading thousands we didn't notice more than fifty who weren't just as tanned as the sun could make them. The sports department of each district and each factory sees to it that the bodies are well developed. The interesting thing is that these were not just school children; an over-

whelming majority are young workers. Sports here are not something to be enjoyed while in school and then forgotten after you get out.

The group representing the Red Army was splendid. All have perfectly developed bodies and their heads shaved. Even people opposed to the Soviets are constantly having to admit that the Red Army is the finest collection of strong, intelligent soldiers to be found anywhere.

This parade of the Soviet youth had great significance for the development of sports which in turn develop bodies. While it is usually soft-pedaled in America everyone living in Europe knows that another world war is just a question of time. With Hitler making actual statements that the Soviet Union is his enemy and telling the Germans that they must expand at the expense of the Soviet Union, things do not look so good. So while guns and uniforms were not a part of the parade, nevertheless in the background stands the realization that many of these same youth will be called upon to defend the socialistic construction and development of the Soviet Union. This does not bother them but spurs them on since they feel that they really have something to defend and fight for. The soldiers of other countries will be fighting to maintain capitalism—which will delight in throwing the surviving soldiers out of work the first minute that profits are not being produced for the industrialists.

The girls are the most versatile that I have ever seen. They are strong and not afraid to do work considered only for men in other countries. They are prepared for anything and in case of war a larger share of the industry could be carried on by women alone than by the women in any other country.

Their faces were actually beaming, and when they received a wave or greeting from Stalin and the others on the reviewing stand they let out loud shouts which echoed across the Red Square. They were well trained and the marching was something to be proud of.

The mass exercises following the parade were beautifully executed and some of the more difficult stunts must have required hours of practice. Four hundred took part in a fencing stunt which was perfectly timed and extremely difficult. The foils all struck at the same time, the theme being that of a duel between long lines of red and white contestants. Imagine two hundred duels going on at the same time with perfect coordination. Some of the crack tumblers put on a stunt with girl dancers which was both extremely artistic and extremely difficult from the point of view of the gymnasts.

The continuous string of marching sportsmen, the dominance of red banners and costumes made a striking picture. The strength of the bodies and the fine spirit reflected from so many smiling faces is something to contrast with the youth of those countries where uncertainty, poverty and unemployment are the common things to which they may look forward.

The whole affair lasted six and a half hours and over 120,000 actually took part in the parade and performance which followed. The world will hear more from the Soviet youth as time goes on.



BOOKS

AN INTRODUCTION TO SEX EDUCATION, by Winifred Richmond. (Farrar & Rinehart) \$2.50

(Reviewed by Dr. Herman de Fremery)

A SUMMARY of our present knowledge upon the biology, the history, and the psychology of sex, made available for the general reader as a background for informed thinking, is the professed purpose of this book. Dr. Richmond has done an acceptable job of it in the biologic, anthropologic and historic fields. In her chapters on general biologic considerations and on the biology of reproduction in man, as also in her treatment of sex in primitive society, and in the historical period, she has given a balanced and often lively survey.

But the chapter on the "Psychology of Sex" is gravely misleading. It presents the theories of psycho-analysis as if they were the facts of psychology. The "stages of psycho-sexual development", from the "oral erotic" and "anal erotic" of infancy, through the "narcissistic", "latency" and "homosexual", are mere Freudian assumptions, they are not the established facts of scientific observation. There is here, too, the usual psycho-analytic confusion of thought due to the interchangeable use of the words sex, pleasure and love, in arguing from one type of behavior to another. The notions of Autoerotic, Narcissistic and Homosexual Personalities are notably ambiguous concepts, apparently constructed to justify a theory; for the existence of such types as these, as the author describes them, there is no warrant whatsoever in scientific psychology. The height of psychologic and physiologic fantasy is reached in the concept of the "libido", which is here both a vague "body of feeling", and an even vaguer "flow of love-energy".

A more realistic attitude is evidenced in the consideration of the practical issues discussed in the chapters on problems of sex, on sex and society, and on sex and education. These are interestingly written.

The author has read very widely, culled very diligently, and thought very earnestly, but the results come tumbling down the pages in an indiscriminate cataract of facts and opinions, surmises, theories and interpretations. The scientific temper is offended at misstatements and loose thinking in a book purporting to be authoritative, such as: the "instinct of self-preservation" (which does not exist); the "ingrained horror of incest", (which has to be taught through an array of prohibitions); the "excess energy" of females which "goes into" reproduction, whereas that of males goes into the elaboration of secondary sexual characteristics (!); religio-sexual orgies of antiquity in which man "lost all sense of decency" (though behaving in the conventional way approved by the community under the circumstances).

The volume ends on the theme "sex is life", an incorrect assertion of identity that leads to some rather silly statements.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN HAYS HAMMOND. (Farrar & Rinehart) \$5

(Reviewed by Karl Wyllis)

OBERVE the contented Californian, smacking his lips over memories of deals and dollars, tossing a kindly word of advice to the workingman here, giving him a fatherly pat on

the back there!

John Hays Hammond, quite satisfied with himself, wants us all to know what a good guy he is so he has devoted a mere two volumes to telling us about it. It's great stuff if you are a genealogist, and the historian will find much valuable data on early California; but to a United Frontier it is akin to waving a red flag at a bull.

With that bland, utter conviction that the rich can do no wrong, Hammond proudly reports capitalistic campaigns of eighty years (politely known as empire building) and the volumes are replete with anecdotes of Cecil Rhodes, imperialist-de-luxe, of strike-breaking, of typical American (Hearst version) go-grab-itiveness. These are garnished with thrilling recollections of scholarly adventures at Yale and endless mentions of upper-crusters of his acquaintance. It is an autobiography which must please Mr. Hammond very much, but it has an air to it that will rile even the palest shade of Leftist. It is quite apropos that he spells Negro, for example, with a small "n".

REDDER THAN THE ROSE, by Robert Forsythe. (Covici, Friede) \$2

(Reviewed by Lincoln Steffens)

THIS is the book that has made the critics stop to shout that we Americans have got a new, another humorist. A successor to Mark Twain and further back to Swift. That seems likely to me. The critics cannot be sure because Forsythe laughs at the most successful of them. And his rare and genial laughter takes the hide and fame off them. It is not a cruel humor, but it is true and final. You laugh, you laugh aloud as you read and then you look around for the body. Mencken and Nathan, Hearst, "silent, white and beautiful", Hemingway, Alexander Woolcott, all of them and many of the columnists, the holiest of them, are called up, stripped, stabbed, strangled and laid low. Of course, they are not dead; words do not kill. You can't murder a man with a column or an essay or a book. No, a humorist is not fatal, but he can furnish the "makings" for suicide. But Robert Forsythe evidently did not mean to murder any soul. Robert Briffault says that the murderous power of this new genius of laughter comes from the source of mercy; from a profound perception that some Thing, not some body is the matter. His humor is due to an insight into what really is the matter with both the world and the other humorists in it. Well, we'll agree to that, but also I give credit to the well-known fact that *Redder Than the Rose* was written for the unscrupulous columns of the *New Masses*, where the editors and readers have no awe for anything in our civilization except machines and mechanics. Forsythe could let himself go there. He works under another name on other weeklies, etc., where he could be suppressed and learn to appreciate the other suppressed humorists.

THE ISLAND, by Claire Spencer. (Harrison Smith and Robert Haas) \$2.50

THE locale of this novel is an island off the coast of Scotland, where the inhabitants are governed by the sea, "forever blowing them forward or holding them back".

But so far as the characters in the book are concerned, they are forever held back. They are thwarted with one catastrophe after the other. So much happens to them that a trilogy of these people would scarcely be enough.

However, the superficial handling of the innumerable

stormy events and the casual descriptions surrounding the eight deaths which occur, deprives both the characters and the story of any actual significance. It remains in spite of all the action, dull and monotonous reading. The writing is mediocre, the characters cold and remote.

The subject material might possibly have been interestingly told, although the individual grievances of a group of isolated men and women, off the coast of Scotland, seem pretty unimportant when so many general and vigorous situations lie before the eyes of the contemporary writer.

—E. S.

I SPEAK FOR THE SILENT, by Vladimir V. Tchernavin.
(Boston: Hale, Cushman & Flint) \$2.50

(Reviewed by John Rockwell)

THIS book is an amazing tale told by a scientist who has had the good fortune to escape from the Soviet Union. It is his personal message to the "christian" people of the "outside" world. It is the discharge of his "moral obligation" to those he left behind, the fulfillment of his "duty to speak for those whose voices cannot be heard".

Pathos and despair are the keys, the complete degradation and to some extent the extermination of the Soviet intelligentsia. His descriptions are filled with the horror and suffering which he "and a few million others" endured at the hands of the GPU. He willingly tells in squalid detail how confessions of "wrecking" (wilful misguidance, or conscious sabotage in the various fields of production) are "third-degree-ed" out of scientific experts. He then points out that these confessions are used for propaganda by the Communist Party to explain the complete failure of their economic structure to the masses.

The author's own story, his work, coldness, hunger, arrest, trial, torture, deportation and final escape afford the locomotion for this revaluation of the conditions which really exist today behind the walls of Soviet censorship. These facts have "never been revealed before" because the Communists have built a beautiful stage to conceal the real conditions from sceptical foreign eyes. The thousands of prisoners being moved daily are marched on little used streets and by-ways to avoid the observation of prying tourists.

There may be, perhaps is, some truth in this book. But its presentation is always exaggerated to the point of absurdity. On every page there is an expression of the author's prejudice, his hatred, contempt and fear of all Communists in the Soviet Union. His account of the tremendous difficulties in the attempt to co-ordinate all fields of production under the Five-Year-Plan could be of great value. But his bellowing and aimless charging about the peaceful pastures of good judgment at the mere sight of red has reduced the facts to such personal reaction that they are of little value. And this fuming and prejudiced account does not seem consistent with the author's description of himself as a scholarly expert in the field of ichthyology. It is hardly the work of a "scientific observer".

The *Readers' Digest* digested this book for its 500,000 readers. No wonder people are puzzled about the Soviet Union.

THE SUPREME LAW, by Maurice Maeterlinck.
(E. P. Dutton & Co.) \$2

(Reviewed by Karl Wyllis)

ALAW that even a Vigilante can't break comes up for discussion in Maurice Maeterlinck's latest work, *The Supreme Law*.

The systematic and unfathomable characteristics of the known universe have excited his interest and in this volume he sets down what he concludes to be the governing law.

This "great law, the essential law which governs the motions of all things" he summarizes in the following words: "Matter attracts matter in direct ratio to mass, and inversely to the square of the distance." In other words, gravitation, to you.

Just to remind us how little we know about even that, he adds that "we shall only begin to know what gravitation is when we begin to know what matter is. And of matter we know only so far some characteristics of probably minor significance. All that can be said in the meantime is that gravitation is the action of matter on matter. It is impalpable, invisible, formless, without color, without odour, without temperature and silent as thought. Nothing can destroy or diminish save itself, and its effects alone are felt by our muscles." The professor admits that it might even be a spiritual force, perhaps God himself.

Along the way, Maeterlinck takes us on trips through the universe that require every ounce of imagination available, while others open fantastic and fascinating new channels of thought. The book is a stimulating mental experience, starting the mind on journeys which end at the point at which man is unable to comprehend anything farther. If you've ever tried to figure where the universe stops and if it does, what is beyond that and where it stops, all things having to have an end so far as we are able to reason, you'll get the idea.

In passing, Maeterlinck takes a crack or two at Einstein's theories and while the lay reader probably won't understand it all, *The Supreme Law* is worthy of consideration. K. S. Shelvankar has done a splendid job of translating from the French.

CORRESPONDENCE

Editor, Pacific Weekly,
Sir:

Thanks. Pacific Weekly is coming right along.

Congratulations. "Epic and Revolution" was published, notwithstanding pronounced editorial dissensions.

Relief. Have been aching to say there's too much worrying about an "united front". Earl Du Freyne French said it.

Consolation. The situation in the enemy camp is hotter. The "Grass Roots" Convention is another indication that retrogressive leaders are getting very uncomfortable.

Two Fronts. An united front can't be in a given genus as long as the heterogeneous ideas haven't had time to revolve around each other to find the side which can adhere. As soon as retrogressive leaders can get together and draw into the fold that portion of the people who can be fooled all of the time, there will be two united fronts.

Maxim. All who are not against me are for me.
Jamestown, Calif.

E. M. Scanavino

Editor, Pacific Weekly,
Sir:

Mr. Conover (July 29) falls into a rather serious error. It is perhaps natural that one should praise John L. Spivak, but

not, alas! for his latest book. It must be that Spivak watches San Francisco with a New Yorker's eye.

In *America Faces the Barricades* our great labor reporter reveals himself as a Liberal rather than as an honest communist. The thought at the core of his mind is that of the "Public"—sprawling, immense, undefinable and omnipotent. In dealing with the General Strike he says "when the newspapers almost had the 1,300,000 citizens of the Bay Area convinced the (longshoremen's) strike was Moscow-inspired" the unions went out. O great Public, to Thee must the unions cringingly come! If my memory serves me, the Alameda County Central Labor Council has a membership of 47,000; that of San Francisco, around 90,000. Shall we multiply these numbers by wives, children and sympathizers?

The idea of the Public is purely Liberal; that is, a comfortable rationalization of uncomfortable facts. It is, at any event, scarcely to be expected in an honest labor reporter. But then Spivak has not, we imagine, spent much time in San Francisco.

We will not speak of the natural antipathy which Spivak finds the American worker to have towards the word "communist". A great many things have happened in the year-long interval between the writing of certain parts of the book and its publication. Only Lenin could understand history before it happened.

Berkeley, Calif.

Karl Long

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"Allow me to tell you that I think Pacific Weekly the most vigorous and inspiring journal of its kind I have had the opportunity of reading."—Ray Studt, Calistoga, California.

"I look forward with eager anticipation to the arrival of Pacific Weekly on Saturday. It really seems to be getting better and better. I should hate to be deprived of your paper at the present time."—H. D. B. Soule, San Francisco.

"Your magazine deserves my heartiest congratulations. I have enjoyed showing it to my friends. They have been delighted."—Ron Mackie, Pasadena, California.

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